NAXOS
A Guided Tour of
The Romantic Era
Volume 2

PAGANINI, NICOLÒ (1782-1840)

1 Violin Concerto No. 1 in D major, Op. 6, MS 21, I. Allegro maestoso
2 Violin Concerto No. 2 in B minor, Op. 7, MS 48, III. Rondo a la clochette, 'La campanella'
3 Centone di sonate, Op. 64, MS 112: Sonata No. 1 in A minor, I. Introduction – Allegro
4 Centone di sonate, Op. 64, MS 112: Sonata No. 2 in D major, I. Adagio
5 Sonata VII, I. Allegro giusto
6 Sonata VII, II. Polacca: Andantino allegretto
7 Sonata for Gran Viola and Guitar, I. Introduction – Larghetto
8 Sonata for Gran Viola and Guitar, III. Theme and Variations
9 24 Caprices, Op. 1, No. 1 in E major
10 24 Caprices, Op. 1, No. 6 in G minor
11 24 Caprices, Op. 1, No. 17 in E flat major
12 24 Caprices, Op. 1, No. 24 in A minor
13 Ghiribizzi, MS 43, No. 17 in D major: Andantino (after Le streghe from Il noce di Benevento by Süssmayr)
14 Introduction and Variations in E flat major on Non più mesta from Rossini's La Cenerentola, Op. 12, MS 22 (arr. F. Kreisler for violin and piano)
15 Moto perpetuo, Op. 11, MS 72 (arr. F. Kreisler for violin and piano)
16 24 Caprices, Op. 1: No. 24 in A minor (arr. F. Kreisler for violin and piano)

WEBER, CARL MARIA VON (1786-1826)

17 Oberon, J. 306, Overture
18 Der Freischutz, J. 277, Overture
19 Der Freischutz, J. 277, Act I: Nein, länger trag' ich nicht die Qualen – Durch die Walder, durch die Auen (Max)
20 Der Freischutz, J. 277, Act II: Wie nahte mir der Schlummer - Leise, leise, fromme Weise (Agathe)
21 Clarinet Concerto No. 1 in F minor, Op. 73, II. Adagio ma non troppo
22 Clarinet Concerto No. 1 in F minor, Op. 73, III. Rondo: Allegretto
23 Clarinet Concertino in C minor / E flat major, Op. 26, J. 109
24 Konzertstück in F minor, Op. 79, J. 282
25 Clarinet Quintet in B flat major, Op. 34 (J. 182), I. Allegro
26 Clarinet Quintet in B flat major, Op. 34 (J. 182), II. Fantasia: Adagio ma non troppo
27 Grand Duo Concertant for Clarinet and Piano in E flat major, Op. 48 (J. 204), I. Allegro con fuoco
28 Piano Sonata No. 1 in C major, Op. 24, J. 138, I. Allegro
29 Aufforderung zum Tanze (Invitation to the Dance), Op. 65, J. 260
30 Piano Sonata No. 2 in A flat major, Op. 39, J. 199, IV. Rondo: Moderato e molto grazioso
31 Sonata No. 3 in D minor, Op. 49 (J. 206), I. Allegro feroce
32 Piano Sonata No. 4 in E minor, Op. 70 (J. 287), III. Andante quasi Allegretto, consolante
33 Piano Sonata No. 4 in E minor, Op. 70 (J. 287), IV. Finale: La Tarantella – Prestissimo
34 Rondo brillante, 'La gaité', Op. 62 (J. 252)

MEYERBEER, GIACOMO (1791–1864)

35 Semiramide, Act I: Sinfonia
36 Semiramide, Act I: Cavatina: Sperai su questa sponda trovare il mio riposo (Scitalce)
37 Le ricordanze
38 6 canzonettes italiennes, No. 6. Basta dir ch'io sono amante

PAGANINI, NICOLÒ (1782-1840)

Paganini was the greatest violinist of his age, exercising a strong influence on the developing technique of violin-playing and, through his virtuosity on the instrument, on the ambitions of performers on other instruments. Born in Genoa in 1782, he studied there, at first with his father, and showed great talent. He later travelled to Parma for lessons with various famous teachers. He spent eight years, from 1801, at Lucca, later as solo violinist to the court of Napoleon's sister, installed there as ruler by her brother. From 1810 he travelled as a virtuoso, at first in Italy and then, from 1828, abroad, causing a sensation wherever he went, his phenomenal technique giving rise to rumours of diabolical assistance. His tours encompassed all the major cities in Europe, including several in Germany, Austria, France, Eastern Europe and England. From a relatively early date, however, he was plagued by ill health, including syphilis and tuberculosis. His career went into partial decline from 1834, when he returned to his home city of Genoa. Though he did not perform, he taught and focused on composition. This period was also characterised by a significant deterioration in his health, and he eventually died in Nice in 1840.

MUSIC FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA (Tracks 1-2)
Paganini wrote a number of works for violin and orchestra for his own concert use. These include five numbered concertos, the second of which, the Concerto in B minor, contains the movement 'La campanella', borrowed later by Liszt. Well-known sets of variations for violin and orchestra include *I Palpiti*, based on an operatic aria by Gioacchino Rossini (1792–1868), and *Le Streghe*, based on a theme from an opera by Mozart's pupil Franz Süssmayr (1766–1803).

CHAMBER MUSIC (Tracks 3-8)
Chamber music is to be found in the works for violin and guitar written by Paganini, who also had a considerable interest in the latter instrument. These compositions include groups of sonatas and a set of quartets for guitar and string trio.

VIOLIN SOLO (Tracks 9-12)
Paganini's famous 24 Caprices for unaccompanied violin provide a compendium of violin technique and vehicles for dazzling virtuoso display. The last of the Caprices was used by Johannes Brahms (1833–1897) for two books of piano variations on the theme and by Sergei Rachmaninov (1873–1943) in his *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* for piano and orchestra.

OTHER SELECTED WORKS (Tracks 13-16)

WEBER, CARL MARIA VON (1786-1826)

Carl Maria von Weber was trained as a musician from his childhood, the son of a versatile musician who had founded his own travelling theatre company. Weber's musical gifts were fostered by his father. Travel brought the chance of varied if inconsistent study, in Salzburg with Michael Haydn (1737–1806) and elsewhere with musicians of lesser ability. A brief and idyllic period in the service of Duke Eugen of Württemberg-Öls at Karlsruhe was followed by three years as secretary to Duke Ludwig of Wurttemberg. The financial dealings of his father, who had joined him there, led to imprisonment and expulsion, and a return to a career as an active musician, at first mainly as a pianist, appearing in the principal cities of Germany. In 1817 he was invited to Dresden, where it was hoped he would establish German opera, although the first performance of *Der Freischütz* was given in Berlin in 1821. In spite of deteriorating health, the result of tuberculosis, Weber accepted a commission from Covent Garden for an English opera, *Oberon*, which was first performed there in April 1826 under the direction of the composer. The English weather could only further damage his health, and he died during the night of 4 June on the eve of his intended departure for Germany.

OPERA (Tracks 17-20)
Weber's achievement was both considerable and influential. In German opera he had opened a new and rich vein that subsequent composers were to explore. The opera *Der Freischütz* ('The Marksman') blends many of the ingredients typical of German Romanticism, and was a landmark work in the new 'national' school of opera. His operas show imaginative orchestration and lyrical facility.

ORCHESTRAL MUSIC AND CONCERTOS (Tracks 21-24)
Weber wrote two symphonies and a number of works for chorus and orchestra. He also wrote two piano concertos and a Konzertstück for piano and orchestra, as well as a Horn Concertino and Bassoon Concerto. His two concertos and the concertino for clarinet were written for the clarinettist Heinrich Baermann. The famous *Aufforderung zum Tanze* ('Invitation to the Dance') is well known in an orchestral version of a work originally written for piano.

CHAMBER MUSIC (Tracks 25-27)
Weber was not prolific in terms of his chamber music, but he did write a Clarinet Quintet and a Grand Duo Concertant for clarinet and piano, successors to the clarinet concertos and concertino for Baermann. He also composed a Piano Quartet and a Trio for piano, cello and flute.

PIANO MUSIC (Tracks 28-34)
By far the best known of Weber's pieces for piano is the *Aufforderung zum Tanz* ('Invitation to the Dance'), a charming programme piece following the progress of an invitation to dance. Weber's other piano compositions include four sonatas for the instrument, numerous smaller pieces in various genres (including ecossaises, fughettas and variations), and some music for four hands.

MEYERBEER, GIACOMO (1791–1864)

Born near Berlin in the year of Mozart's death into a family with cultured interests, Meyerbeer (whose birthname was actually Jacob Beer) was a pupil of Georg Joseph Vogler (1749–1814) and near contemporary of his fellow pupil Carl Maria von Weber (1786–1826), though he was also taught by Muzio Clementi (1752–1832). He travelled to Italy during his youth, and adopted the name 'Giacomo'. He made his career in Paris, where he became the most important composer of French grand opera, a sub-genre that emphasised spectacular sets and epic drama. Operas such as *Robert le diable* proved extraordinarily successful. Nevertheless, he still retained wide cosmopolitan connections, in particular serving as *Generalmusikdirektor* from 1842 under King Friedrich Wilhelm IV of Prussia, in whose service he continued after a resignation from his original position in 1848, a year before he returned to Paris. Meyerbeer was a man of independent means, which enabled him to exercise considerable care over the composition of operas and the choice of appropriate singers, and some control over the press. This led to malicious accusations, especially from Richard Wagner (1813–1883), that he had bought his success; in fact his music is highly imaginative, beautiful and original (and was profoundly influential on Wagner). He died on 2 May 1864.

OPERA (Tracks 35-36)

All told, Meyerbeer wrote about seventeen operas. He was one of the most famous composers of 'grand opera' (an especially spectacular, large-scale form of the genre) of the nineteenth century. He won his first great success at the Paris Opéra in 1831 with *Robert le diable* ('Robert the Devil'). This was followed by *Les Huguenots, Le Prophète* and finally by *L'Africaine*, all three with texts by the famous librettist Eugène Scribe. The last of these grand operas was staged in Paris in 1865, the year after the composer's death.

OTHER SELECTED WORKS (Tracks 37-38)

Text by Keith Anderson, David McCleery, David Patmore and Caroline Waight